

Patrick Murphy, Brian Baird Fight to Prepare Students for Green Energy Jobs (June 5, 2008)

Washington, D.C. - Meeting our country's green energy needs will require a new generation of skilled technical workers. Despite the growing need, the number of high school students with advanced technical training is actually declining. To help train students for careers in green energy, Pennsylvania Congressman Patrick Murphy (D-8th District) and Washington State Congressman Brian Baird (D-3rd District) included a provision to give technical schools better access to advanced equipment and technology.

Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act, which would authorize nearly \$7 billion in grants for improvements to aging public schools. Murphy and Baird's amendment to this bill would ensure the funds could be spent by schools, particularly technical schools, to purchase equipment that trains students for work in the growing green energy industry.

Their measure clarifies the original legislation in order to authorize funds so they can be spent by local school districts to modernize their career and technical facilities to adequately address the challenges of training the 21st Century "green workforce." The amendment specifically allows for the modernization, renovation, replacing or repair of facilities for career and technical education programs including those related to the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries.

"Faced with the record price of gas and a dangerous dependence on foreign oil, we must harness new technology to meet our energy needs. We can innovate our way to green energy but we need to prepare students who want to join a green workforce," said Congressman Patrick Murphy. "By providing access to new equipment and technology, we can help schools prepare students for 'green collar' jobs and lead our country to a renewable energy future."

"There is a growing demand for skilled workers in America, specifically for companies looking to promote green jobs. As co-founder of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, I have been working to ensure that career and technical education programs have the resources they need to meet those areas with the greatest need, including the green workforce," said Rep. Baird. "By equipping students with the tools they need to become involved in growing green industries, we are not only strengthening America's workforce, but also investing in renewable-energy initiatives and improving the environment."

"As our country works to address the major challenge posed by global warming, we must give our young people the skills needed to perform the green jobs of today and tomorrow," said U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the chairman of the House

Education and Labor Committee. "Thanks to the hard work of Congressmen Murphy and Baird, the bill passed by the House today will help produce a new generation of workers ready to create a more sustainable and energy efficient future for our country."

A major national investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency could create more than three million jobs over the next ten years. These are sustainable, profitable jobs, however, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory the lack of skilled workers is the largest non-technical barrier to the advancement of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

About The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act

H.R.

3021 authorizes nearly \$7 billion in grants for the modernization, renovation and repair of public school facilities, most of which are over 40 years old. Eligible projects include repair of faulty air systems, lead abatement, asbestos removal, and technology access installation. Congressman Patrick Murphy (D-PA) and Congressman Brian Baird (D-WA), head of the Career and Technical Education caucus, included language to make sure technical schools are eligible for funds to modernize and prepare the 21st century workforce. Murphy and Baird worked together to include this measure in the final legislation.

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